1: Nimuendaju E-5 (1929-1936) 1946 SO8 Timbira SO8

133 in the waterheds, where a tougher stratum of rock offered more vigorous resistance to weathering. Seldom does the elevation of these *serras* exceed a hundred meters above the valley bottom and everywhere it remains below three hundred meters above sea level. Notwithstanding their insignificance, however, these hills have played a great part in Timbira history, since their steep walls formed natural forts to which the Indians retreated on the approach of enemies.

There is no statement concerning Timbira tribes ever inhabiting the low coastal steppes of Maranhão, which are periodically exposed to inundations; but the more northerly tribes of this branch did formerly share the lake region, well stocked with fish, that extends on both sides of the lower Pindaré, Grajahú, and Mearim. However, the true home of the Timbira people lies in the arid steppe: only there—not in the primeval Amazonian forests—was it possible for the peculiar Timbira culture to evolve.

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132 The climate is noticeably drier than in the adjacent Amazonian area. Unlike the territory farther east and southeast, the country does not suffer the terrors of a drought, yet there is a definite dry season from July until December. This sharp division into a rainy and a dry period affects not only economic but also social life.

Naturally on cloudless days the tropical heat from the sun is intense in the open steppe, and after noon the sand grows so hot that even Indians cannot stand on it with comfort. But after midnight the temperature often drops to such an extent that a fire is required outdoors, especially if a wind should begin to blow before sunrise.

Conquest and White Settlement

175 The Timbira country was simultaneously occupied by civilized newcomers along four distinct avenues of approach: (1) from São Luiz do Maranhão up the Mearim and Itapicurú; (2) from Pará up the Tocantins; (3) from Goyaz down the Tocantins; (4) from Bahia across the steppes to the northwest, across Piauhy.

Oddly enough, it was the last of these attempts at settlement that proved most potent and most significant for the Indians, for in the seventeenth century and the beginning of the eighteenth Bahia was a center for Portuguese colonization, while São Luiz, Pará, and Goyaz formed mere outposts.

The Portuguese probably did not come into close contact with the Timbira until after the expulsion of the French from the island of Maranhão. Then, in 1624, Bento Maciel Parente, notorious as a butcher of Indians, established a fort at the mouth of the Itapicurú, below the present town of Rosario, and afflicted the tribes of the vicinity by his slave raids.[1] Then followed Jesuit activity: in the 'sixties of the seventeenth century, the missionaries labored hard with the Guajajára a Tupí tribe that at every opportunity fled back into the woods. They also had stations on the Itapicurú and Monim, but these failed to exert any influence on the savage Kaikaí and Uruatí suffering grievously from attacks by them. Throughout the remainder of the seventeenth century, indeed, until 1731, the Portuguese fought for the possession of northeastern Maranhão, between the Itapicurú and the Parnahyba. Whether the aborigines of that region included Timbira, remains unascertainable. At all events, the tenacious resistance of diverse Indian tribes rendered progress along this line relatively slow.

In the meantime the Jesuits, accompanied by military escorts, also entered the Tocantins area.[2] In 1763, a troop of Paulistas appeared, probably descending the Tocantins. They were headed by Pascoal Paes de Araujo, who enslaved the peace-

[1] Berredo, Annaes, 1:191. Saint-Adolphe, Diccionario, "Itapicurú Grande."
[2] Nimuendajú, The Apinayé, 1.